

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



**GYMPIE
REGIONAL
COUNCIL**



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Foreword

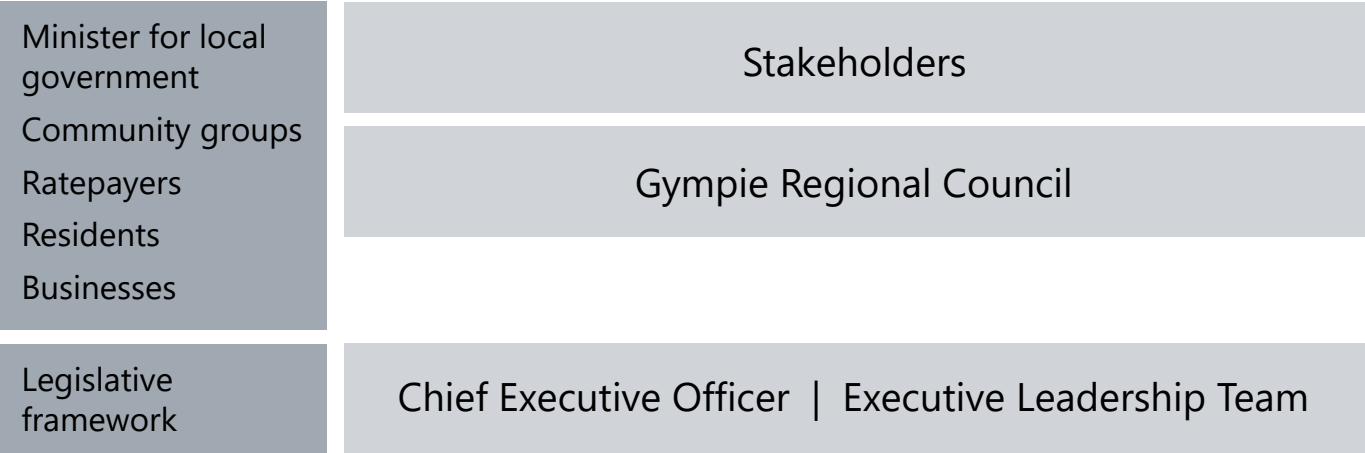
This framework sets out the governance principles and standards for accountability that are expected of all staff and officers of Gympie Regional Council (council).

It aims to provide a comprehensive but high-level account of how council applies its principles to achieve good governance. Elected members and all council employees must demonstrate a commitment to applying the governance principles in undertaking the duties of their roles.

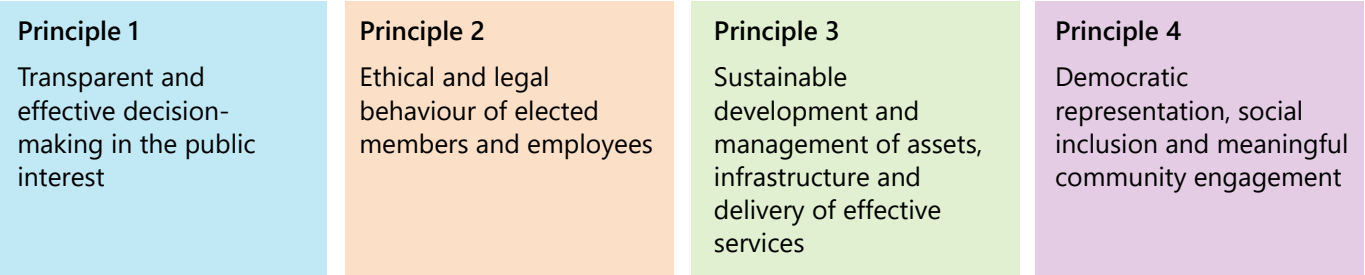
Effective governance arrangements, ethical leadership and decision-making, accountability and role clarity underpin our governance controls.

This framework will help us to achieve and implement sound governance practices and will ensure our stakeholders and the community can be confident in the integrity and good governance of council and the quality of our services to the community.

Governance Structure



Governance principles



Governance practices



Introduction

Governance impacts the entire community, industry sectors and government bodies. The practice of good governance is increasingly seen as critical for ensuring that an organisation:

- has a legal and ethical basis
- makes decisions in the interests of stakeholders
- is a good corporate citizen.

In order to represent and lead the community that has elected council via democratic principles, it must meet governance demands.

Characteristics of good governance in local government

Strategy

Relates to planning and structures, such as strategic/ corporate and operational planning, organisational structure and having defined and appropriate roles and responsibilities.

Culture

Relates to leadership and integrity, demonstrated in leadership structures and behaviours, executive oversight of strategic decisions, embodiment of leadership principles, conduct and values, employee engagement and commitment to service delivery. Council's values are stated in its Corporate Plan 2022-2027 – Accountability, Communication, Customer Service Focused, Integrity, and Teamwork and Collaboration.

Relations

Relates to communication and reputation, shown in internal and external communication and relationships, striving for a reputation for excellence and working effectively across organisational boundaries.

Performance

Relates to effectiveness and efficiency, through performance monitoring, evaluation and reporting at an individual and organisational level.

Compliance and accountability

Relates to meeting statutory and other obligations, through audit, delegation of authority, and having policies, processes and plans to manage finances, risk, human resources, as well as ethical, equal opportunity, occupational health and safety and record keeping obligations.

Governance principles

The governance principles lay the foundation and are the means for assessing the extent to which good governance is occurring at council. The principles are the 'what'.

Principle 1

Transparent and effective decision-making in the public interest.

- Council must account for its activities and have systems that support accountability.
- Decision-making processes are in place demonstrating transparency and accountability which underpin excellence in local government.
- Internal structures support independent reviews of processes and decision-making to assist council to meet its accountability to stakeholders.
- Effective delegations are implemented and maintained.

Principle 2

Ethical and legal behaviour of elected members and employees.

- A positive culture that promotes openness and honesty, where constructive and respectful questioning is encouraged, and accountability is clear.
- Clarity of roles and responsibilities within council and a sophisticated approach to defining and implementing these.
- Effective working relationships between the Mayor, Chief Executive Officer, elected members and employees.

Principle 3

Sustainable development and management of assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services.

- A clear vision and strategic/corporate plan that is produced through a comprehensive and inclusive process, which is owned by the community, council and administration.
- Robust and transparent financial and asset management particularly in terms of stewardship of community assets, both now and into the future.
- An active performance management system that enables elected members and management to be openly accountable for their performance.
- An effective approach to the identification, assessment, monitoring and management of risks is established and maintained.

Principle 4

Democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement.

- Consultation and engagement are undertaken that are appropriate to the scope and potential impact of the matter and respect the position and opinion of all stakeholders.
- Consultation feedback is a part of the decision-making process.

Governance practices

For each of the governance principles a set of governance practices are outlined in order to turn the principles into reality. This describes how council actions each of the governance principles on a day-to-day basis. The governance practices illustrate which principle the practice sits under. This is the 'how'.

Decision-making and management

Decision-making is the most important activity undertaken by council. Effective decision-making processes ensure that decisions are made in the best interest of the community.

Effective and efficient strategic planning processes are in place to ensure that corporate plans are implemented.

The Chief Executive Officer ensures that elected members receive quality and timely reports with necessary information, options and clear recommendations, including financial impacts and any associated risks.

An established process for alternative motions allows elected members to raise, amend and draft their own motions.

Decisions made by elected members and employees are of high quality and integrity giving due regard to statutory and policy requirements.

Elected members can seek access to specific information required to understand an item considered by council.

Roles and relationships

An understanding and acceptance of the different roles, and cooperation between all parties, underpins good governance at council.

The relationships between elected members and their interaction with the Chief Executive Officer, should reflect respect for the diversity of opinion and the right for all points of view to be heard with courtesy and respect.

Council recognises the Mayor's general leadership role and mayoral duties as defined in the *Local Government Act 2009*. This includes recognising the Mayor as the chair of council meetings and council spokesperson who carries out civic and ceremonial functions.

Council recognises that the Mayor's leadership role is very important when it comes to good governance.

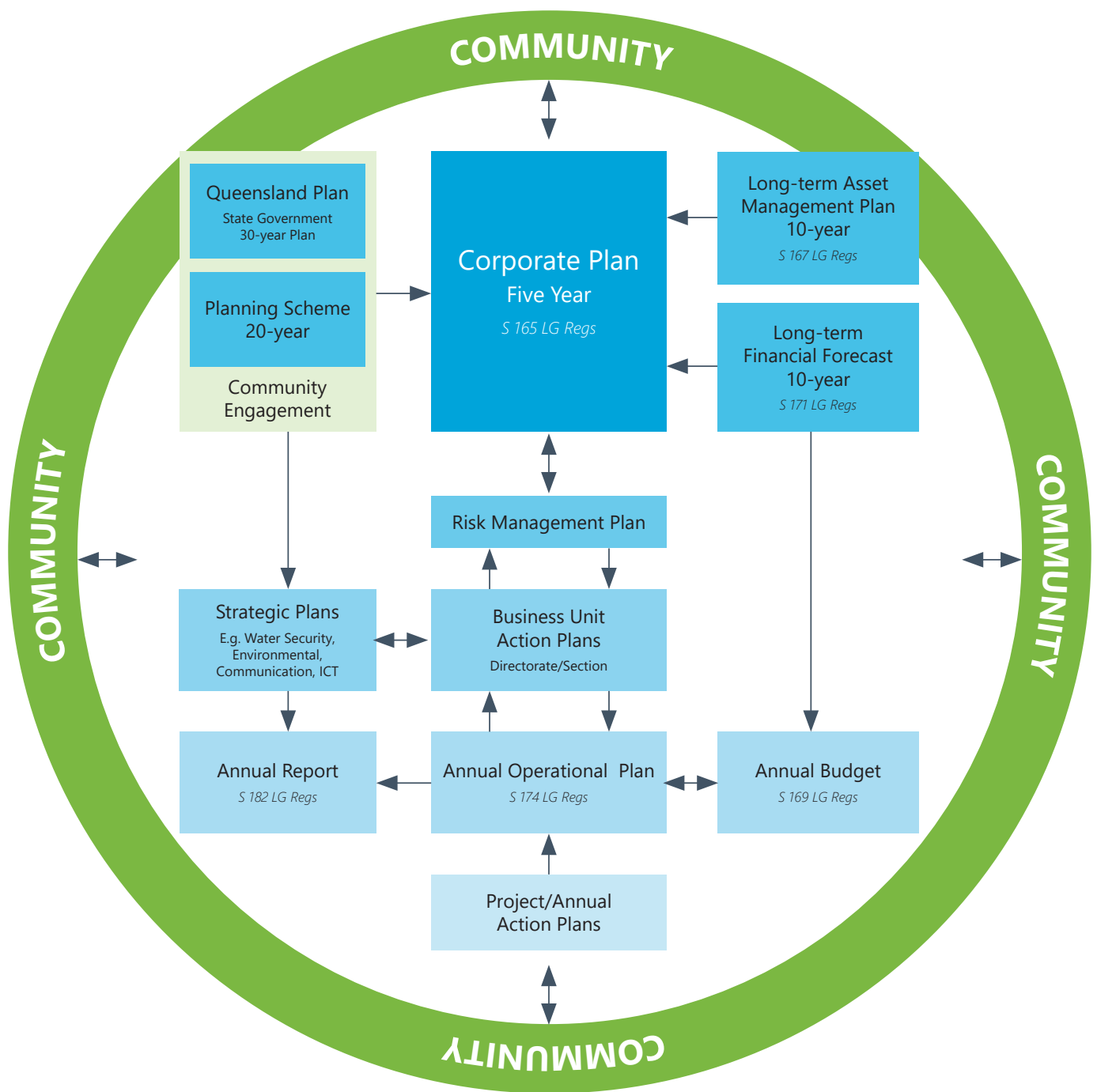
The Mayor will seek to ensure that all elected members are a part of the decision-making process and help them to balance their accountabilities to their constituents and their accountability to council as a whole and therefore to the wider community.

Elected members focus on outcomes, policy and strategy and in so doing are expected to follow the statutory role of elected members as prescribed in the *Local Government Act 2009* and represent and advocate on behalf of their constituents at the council level and:

- facilitate communication between council and the community
- debate issues in an open, honest and informed manner to assist the decision-making process
- keep the entire community in mind when considering and addressing issues and focus on the 'big picture'
- inform the community of, and involve it in, council activities and processes
- collaborate, co-operate and respect diversity
- provide model leadership and good governance.

Council recognises the Chief Executive Officer's role in managing the organisation, to achieve goals and strategies.

The Chief Executive Officer is expected to fulfill these duties in a way that promotes an organisational culture of openness, accountability, fairness and good communication. The statutory functions of the Chief Executive Officer and the planning required are prescribed in the *Local Government Act 2009*.



LG Regs – Local Government Regulation 2012

Delegations

Delegations are a part of the council's decision-making approach. They represent the position of council to entrust certain types of decisions to the Chief Executive Officer or other officers.

Delegations should be in the context of council policy to ensure decisions are consistent with the council's desired policy outcomes.

Delegations of authority are established, maintained and documented by council to empower the actions of delegates, but also to retain oversight of, and accountability for, the decisions made by delegates.

Decisions made under delegation and records of delegations will be retained in accordance with legal requirements for document retention and record keeping. Council will review delegations at least once every financial year.

Independent review

Council has an Audit and Risk Committee to assist council in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities relating to accounting and reporting requirements imposed under the *Local Government Act 2009* and other relevant legislation. The primary roles of the Audit and Risk Committee are to monitor, review and provide advice to Council on matters relating to:

- internal audit function, plan and progress reports
- external audit function
- system of financial management including financial statements
- governance including risk management and compliance
- business continuity
- make recommendations about these matters that need action or improvement.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Council has accountability systems that provide disclosure and review of decision-making and processes. These systems record and support council's accountability to its stakeholders and its legal accountability to the State Government.

Governance culture

Support for frankness, honesty and questioning
Elected members debate issues openly and honestly.

Employees provide frank and timely advice to the Chief Executive Officer and senior management.

The Chief Executive Officer and senior management provide sound and frank advice to elected members.

Innovation

Council considers new and better ways of going about its business in the achievement of its goals. Innovation will be assessed critically by using appropriate risk management and other analysis.

Effective management structures and practices

A management structure that meets its goals and needs, and the structure is characterised by efficient and effective use of human resources and clear accountability. Management practices reinforce accountability and outcomes and incorporate the nurturing of people's capabilities to do their jobs.

Communication

Council has effective internal and external communications practices and encourages feedback. Council's aim is to successfully engage, educate, inform and communicate to its community.

Learning and feedback

Council's focus is on enabling the capabilities of staff to meet operational requirements. Council invests in training for elected members and staff to build capabilities required to fulfill their roles.

Ethical behaviour

Elected members and employees are obliged to comply with the behaviours outlined in the Councillors Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct, including the relevant acts that they refer to. Elected members and employees are obliged to adopt and display council's values of accountability, communication, customer service focused, integrity, and teamwork and collaboration.

Induction

Elected member inductions provide a clear understanding of local government and its governance. Inductions suggest effective methods to produce good outcomes for the community. Inductions highlight differences and complementary elements of elected members and employees, particularly in regard to:

- working relationships
- decision-making processes
- responsibility, accountability and delegations
- code of conduct
- council values and culture.

Vision

Council has in place a strategic corporate planning process that provides detailed objectives to implement policies and strategies to achieve its vision. All stakeholders can participate in the development of strategic planning. Strategic documents form the basis for the business plans and budget and underpin policy development and service delivery. To ensure cohesion, everyone at council is expected to have a good understanding of council's Corporate Plan as well as business plans for their work units.

Working relationships

An effective relationship between the Mayor and elected members promotes the successful delivery of the strategic direction and credibility of council. The relationship is based on mutual respect and understanding of the different roles and is based on:

- the Mayor having a leadership role and this role being respected by elected members
- the Mayor facilitating an inclusive approach to decision-making and involvement in council activities in general
- the Mayor assisting elected members in getting their issues considered by council
- the Mayor taking some responsibility for elected member's training and development and working with the Chief Executive Officer to ensure that elected members receive necessary training opportunities
- elected members treating each other with respect and courtesy
- the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer working closely together, and the relationship is characterised by openness and good communication, with each keeping the other informed about important and relevant issues.

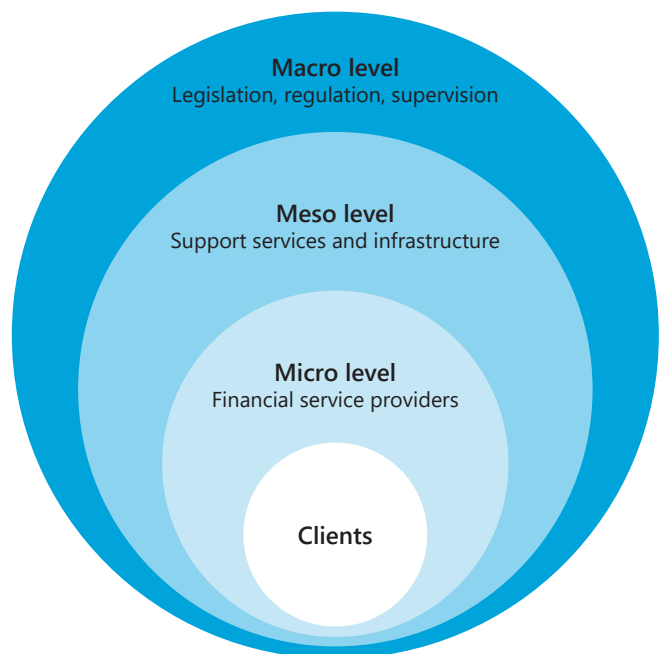
Financial management

Council is responsible for the effective financial management of the region's rate payer funds. Good financial governance requires both council and the administration to play their roles. Council has in place financial plans that are consistent with the Corporate Plan and Operational Plan, and all risks are identified with mechanisms put in place to minimise such risks. These plans and processes may be audited by the Queensland Audit Office.

Community input is sought at an early stage so that such input can help to shape council's plans. This includes, consultation as part of the process of adopting the Corporate Plan.

Council will review its Operational Plan every year, in accordance with *Local Government Act 2009* and regulation. This document is an extension of the current budget process and will provide greater detail on the outcomes to be achieved in a particular year. It will include outcomes expected from the Corporate Plan, related to performance measures which are reported to council on a quarterly basis.

Progressively these plans move from the macro to the micro level. The relationship between each of them is shown diagrammatically below.



- Council ensures that it receives enough reports and other information to adequately monitor its performance, resource allocation, expenditure and activities, and the efficiency and effectiveness of its service delivery.
- Council ensures that it has procurement practices that are sustainable and address all aspects of environmental, social, economic and governance processes.
- Procurement thresholds are regularly reviewed to ensure they provide adequate balance between purchasing principles and risk aversion.

- Council ensures that management of its assets is clearly understood and undertaken in a consistent manner to ensure the necessary protection and renewal of its assets for current and future generations.

Performance management

Council is responsible for monitoring the performance of its strategic direction, goals and financial outcomes as set by the corporate and operational plans.

A reporting process keeps council informed about its performance against the plans. This allows council to rectify issues and be accountable to the community.

The Annual Report provides a progress report on Corporate Plan achievements. It includes the performance measures adopted in the Corporate Plan.

Council is responsible for managing the performance of its Chief Executive Officer. It achieves this by setting and monitoring the Chief Executive Officer's performance plan and communicating its expectations during performance evaluations.

Risk management

Council supports and is committed to a risk management program at a policy and strategic level through the establishment of an Audit and Risk Committee, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*, and the Chief Executive Officer and senior management ensure processes are in place for identifying and managing risk as well as responding to and minimising such risks.

Under the auspices of the Audit and Risk Committee, Council will undertake regular risk assessments of identified areas of its operations (e.g. Information Technology) which will provide conclusions and recommendations for mitigation strategies to be implemented.

Council has a risk and insurance advisor to provide adequate support and services aimed at the reduction of claims frequencies and costs, the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the work force and the development of organisation-wide risk management capacity, as well as specific hazard management initiatives.

Council will employ an in-house resource to oversee risk management functions. To support this process, council has developed a Risk Management Procedure and Corporate and Operational Risk Registers against which council will monitor and control its risk exposure.

Additionally, council seeks other expert advice, including legal advice, from other practitioners qualified in areas of specific expertise. This advice is included in any recommendations that come to Council.

Consultation and engagement

Council embraces consultation as a two-way process that creates genuine opportunities for the community to participate in matters that interest and affect it, ensures transparency and accountability in decision-making, ensures representation of diverse community needs, supports and encourages the community to engage and participate in civic life.

Council facilitates community engagement and consultation types. The main engagement types include community consultations, legislatively required consultations and best practice consultations.

Council further defines its directions and priorities by:

- using research to develop policies and make decisions
- translating community aspirations and seeking best outcomes through appropriate partnerships, initiatives, programs and services
- applying sustainable future principles to its policies and decisions
- remaining a member of the Local Government Association Queensland (LGAQ).

Inquiries

For inquiries on Governance related matters please contact, Manager – Governance, Integrity and Risk on 1300 307 800.



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